

MORTALITY IN TENNESSEE, 1996

General Mortality

- The crude death rate in Tennessee in 1996 was 966 deaths per 100,000 population. Respective rates for white males, white females, black males and black females were 1014, 935, 1105 and 862. Among the regions, Northwest Tennessee had the highest crude death rate with 1,278 deaths per 100,000, followed by three regions – Upper Cumberland (1,089), Northeast (1,084), and Southwest (1,081). The Mid-Cumberland Region had the lowest crude death rate at 698 per 100,000 population. The second lowest regional rate was 928 for both Shelby and Knox Counties. Important contributors to the magnitude of the regional rates are age and racial composition.
- Blacks have younger population age structures than whites, which serve to depress their crude death rates relative to those of whites. For example, only 9% of blacks in Tennessee in 1996 were aged 65 years and older compared with 14% of whites. The age-adjusted death rates for white males, white females, black males and black females were 670, 381, 1110 and 596 per 100,000 population, respectively. Whereas the crude death rate for black males was 18% higher than that of white females, their age-adjusted death rate was nearly three times higher than the corresponding rate for white females.
- To stabilize the data in examining changes in mortality rates, rates for the period 1990-1992 are compared with rates for the period 1994-1996. (Annual data are available from SPOT on the HIT Web site). The age-adjusted death rate for Tennessee for the period 1994-1996 was 555 per 100,000 – virtually unchanged from the rate for 1990-1992 (556 per 100,000). By contrast, the age-adjusted rate for black males rose by 4% to 1,114 per 100,000, and that of white males declined by 3% to 682. The rate for white females increased by 2% to 385 per 100,000, and that of black females declined by 1% to 601.
- Life expectancy at birth represents the average number of years a newborn could be expected to live assuming persistence of prevailing mortality conditions. It has fluctuated over the period 1990-1996 for the Tennessee population. A newborn in 1996 could be expected to live 74.8 years – up from 74.2 years in 1990. In 1996, life expectancy at birth for the general US population was 76.1.
- White males in Tennessee exhibited a steady gain in life expectancy at birth between 1990 and 1996. This gain was almost a year – with the increase from 71.3 to 72.2 years. Life expectancy for US white male newborns was 73.9 years in 1996. Between 1990 and 1996, the remaining expected lifetime for white Tennessee males aged 25 increased from 48.1 years to 48.8 years. For those aged 65, it rose from 14.4 years in 1990 to 15 years in 1996.